THE CEA CRITIC

Formerly THE NEWS LETTER of the College English Association

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STUDENT EVALUATIONS

(Editor's Note: Many of our correspondents report mounting pressures for "student evaluation," or alarm with systems already in effect. In response to many enquiries we hereby offer Ray Armstrong's provocative paper on the subject, with the thought that it may cheer some of our colleagues in their harassment, and may arm others with wise counsel and barbed words.)

To the question "Can the Student Evaluate His Teacher?" the simple answer is, of course, no. Partly because he has not the ability, partly because he has not a real opportunity, partly because no scheme for recording his evaluation can be both fair to him and intelligible to any one else. Going further, I may add that he has no right even to try, and that encouraging him to do so is simply to aggravate his already considerable powers of mischief.

What, however, about the *theory* of such evaluations? There can be only one legitimate reason for allowing them: a conviction that they can help an instructor in his desire to become constantly more effective and useful. And in doing so they must not smother a halfpenny worth of assistance under an intolerable deal of confusion. How much chance do they have of doing what they claim to intend, and, in addition, how much right do they have to try in the first place?

Demoralizing Effect

Well, for one thing, there is a good deal of vexation in them, and some unpleasantness, perhaps even danger; and for another there is a very slim chance that working at their very best they can accomplish anything useful.

Few of us will be permanently disabled by the discovery that we are not universally admired. Yet I have found no one in the world so far who—however hard he grits his teeth in the effort to be a "good sport," as it is sometimes called—truly enjoys having his faults shown in his face, even if they are imaginary faults. We all know that we are not as good teachers as we might be or as we wish to be and as we shall be in Paradise. We all know that we have personal peculiarities that we should like to get rid of but that are as firmly attached to us as our limbs. We all—or most of us—I imagine, do not, while we breathe, give up the effort to become more useful, more lucid, more capable. Thus it is neither agreeable nor helpful to learn semester after semester, perhaps eighty times a year, that we stammer or that our left eyelid droops or that we fiddle with a watch chain while lecturing. We know all that and have known it for some time. And it is probably not very important.

But when the whole world unites—as it may seem after a while—to rise up and tell us about it, we may begin wondering whether we aren't rather queer after all. I suppose, too, though I know of no such case myself, that there is a very real danger of injury, especially to one whose few years of the profession have not had time to cover him with scar tissue. We have all known teachers of highly respectable abilities who would be the easiest of marks; let one have a long record of hypersensitivity due to some minor disfigurement, and he is as vulnerable as St. Sebastian. Given a more sentimental approach, the situation is one to call for a sequel to "Heartache on the Campus." I believe, to come right down to it, that breaking my heart is at least as serious as breaking any freshman's.

I wouldn't mind so much if I had a chance to "evaluate" the boys in return and could do so on the University's time. But I ask you, how sporting is it for the instructor to be unprotected at all points, while the student is so at only one, the academic, precisely the one where he is most callous? He can call me what he will: loafer, incompetent, bore. All I can do is give him an F. The implication here is, in short, that if the process should become equitable, which is to say mutual, it would involve really fearful quantities of paper, prodigious expense of time, and, worst of all, a constantly mounting tide of ill feeling as the evaluation passed from the drooping eyelid and the stammer to questions of mendacity, theft, and legitimacy.

Learners, Not Critics

The point is, after all, that the student, in his capacity as a member of a class, is, at least potentially and theoretically, a learner, not a critic. The instructor knows more about the material of the course than the student does; it is humiliating to have to state that fact aloud. but if it were understood we should be less likely to invite students, as part of their evaluation. to indulge in what is called "Appraisal of Course." They can't appraise it. They don't know enough.

They can describe their personal reactions to hour tests, assignments, *et cetere*, and that is about all. Furthermore, if a given course does not "belong" to a given instructor but is merely imposed upon him from above, a good deal of *anything* a student can say will be futile. Even on such definite matters as hour tests the student is seldom in a position to criticise. Unless an instructor spends a good deal of his class time baring his academic heart, his class has little or no awareness of the pressures, urgencies, evasions, compromises, and expedients that dictate to him.

And Not Psychiatrists

When it comes to the so-called "Appraisal of Instructor" the situation is similar. The instructor knows a great deal more about

(Continued on page 5, Column 2)

CEA INSTITUTE AT CORNING

THE QUESTIONS PUT

Why and how should industry and the academic world combine forces to strengthen the badly shaken liberal arts? What has each to give to the other? These are key questions for the 1953 College English Association Institute, to be held at The Corning Glass Center, Corning, New York, October 15-17.

The fourth in a national series, the 1953 CEA Institute will have the theme: "Industry and the Liberal Arts: An Exchange." The last word has reference not only to the exchange of information and ideas at the conference itself, but also to the basic premise that the liberal arts have much to give, as well as to receive.

At the Institute session 150 academic and business representatives will study these main problems:

1. What is the businessman's stake and need in strengthened liberal arts graduates?
2. Why do liberal arts teachers and students now need and merit strengthened cooperation from business management?
3. Why and how should business management and the academic world cooperate to strengthen the liberal arts graduate?

While essential differences will be franky faced, areas of common concern will be intensively studied. Paramount will be the personal encounter and exchange. What sort of person is the other fellow? How does he try to do his job? How does he feel about it? And how does he want us to feel about it? What are his aims? The limitations within which he has to work? How increase his effectiveness? What changes to merit increased confidence and cooperation? These are questions bound to come up not only in the program itself but especially in personal talks and off-the-record comments.

Membership Fees and Registration

After consultation with our advisers from business and industry, the Institute fee for non-academic representatives has been set at $50.00, which provides for: (1) registration; (2) lodging (October 15, 16); (3) luncheon and dinner (October 15, 16); (4) mid-morning refreshments on Saturday (October 17).

For academic representatives who are *not* also members of The College English Association (national), the Institute fee (for the same services) is $25.00; for CEA members (national), $20.00.

Since the facilites at Corning are limited, those wishing to enroll should do so as soon as possible, sending both the enrollment blank and the accompanying remittance.

Checks should be made out to: Albert P. Madeira, Treas.

PROGRESS REPORT: PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANTS

The program for the 1953 CEA Institute at The Corning Glass Center has made gratifying progress. Authoritative and effective speakers have favorably responded. Technical consultants and advisers are giving generous cooperation. Officials of foundations and many others have commended the progrom. We have had warm response from business and academic circles and from the press.

Courtney Brown of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, who has been closely associated with the development of The Council on Financial Aid to Education, is to give a keynoting address on "Increasing Recognition by Industry of Its Obligation to the Liberal Arts." Coming shortly after the opening of the Council's quarters and the initiation of its services, this talk will have special timeliness and significance. Mr. Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., president of Steuben Glass, Inc., will speak at the opening session. Albert J. Nickerson, vice president of Socony-Vacuum and director of foreign trade, will speak on the qualifications needed in senior management. William C. Caples, newly designated vice president of Inland Steel, will moderate a discussion on how the humanities contribute to the shaping of the management leader.

Other major Institute program participants are Gordon Keith Chalmers, president of Kenyon College and author of *The Republic and the Person*, who is general chairman; Everett Needham Case, president of Colgate University and past chairman of The American Council on Education; C. W. de Kiewiet, president of the University of Rochester and chairman of the American Council of Learned Societies; William Holly Whyte, Jr., Associate Managing editor of *Fortune*; Carter Davidson, President of Union College, and Harry Gideonse, President of Brooklyn College, who is now on an educational mission in India. William Werner, chairman of The CEA committee on Ph.D. curriculum in English, will extend CEA greetings.

Dr. de Kiewiet was one of the American educators invited to attend the conference of universities of the British Commonwealth, held in England this summer, and while abroad, he visited other universities in Western Europe. His address on "The Problem of Higher Education in the Western Democracies" will contain sharp observations on universities here and abroad. In his talk, William Holly Whyte, Jr., author of *Is Anybody Listening?*, will draw on the materials freshly gathered for his new book.

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Institutes Praised

T. M. Pearce (Univ. of New Mexico, CEA vice president), in an article in the summer issue of the *Pacific Spectator* on "The Humanities in the Modern World," urges that the breach between the humanities and the practical callings must be healed and that the humanities must be given the same values in practical terms as the early 16th century advocated. The article praises the work done by the CEA Institutes for teachers and businessmen in forwarding this end.

A feature article in the *New York Herald Tribune* for Sunday, July 26, on "Liberal Arts Education for 'Revolutionay Executives'" by Judith Crist drew heavily on Brother Cormac Philp's talk at the Florida CEA Institute, June 25-26.

CEA Commended

The Committee on American Civilization of the ACLS commended the efforts of CEA to bring about closer understanding between academic persons and institutions and business and industry in relation to the practical value of college training in English. The Committee hoped that eventually business and industry may consider carefully the relevance of general humanistic training to business and commercial employment at the higher levels, but it was the consensus that the most effective start in that direction is probably by way of concentration on training in English.

D. H. DAUGHERTY
Assistant to the Director
American Council of Learned Societies

My Answer is "No"

After a good deal of thought, I find that I cannot subscribe to the CEA Five Point Program, "This We Are For." I believe that it commits us to a losing, if not a lost, battle. It opposes the technological materialism of our time with the same old humanistic ideal of the well-rounded character which has been defeated in every round it has fought since 1590. I agree that we need to emphasize the inadequacy of blind materialism, but I think we had better find a stronger and more attractive alternative.

The notion that literature, "to be reckoned as one of the great values of life, must teach humility, tolerance, wisdom, and magnanimity," and presumably nothing more, leaves me not cold but hot. If I thought that was all that literature could do for me and my students, I would damn it out of hand, as most of them do, and go in for goods and shows that require less effort. Only a dilettante who has inherited money can afford to limit himself to those virtues nowadays, and why should he study?

The humanistic ideal of the well-rounded character is essentially the ideal of the gentleman, preferably, of course, the gentleman of leisure and education. It is a role very hard if not impossible to sustain in a democratic society, whatever the material values of society may be. In our society it seems to me absurd. It has no relevance either to the things we have to do in order to get along or to the things we ought to do in order to make our getting along worth while. It may as well, and I think it should, be abandoned forthwith *in toto*. So much for my Everlasting No.

The Pertinent Question: What Shall I do?

What then does a man need, if not character?

I should say that he needs what has no very good name, but might be called a strong sense of his functional identity, the internal relations that constitute him a living, thinking, changing organism and the external relations that constitute him a member of this collective living, thinking, changing entity called society and an active part of the partly living, more or less comprehensible, certainly changing universe. The pertinent question is not What am I? but What shall I do? And in fact that is the question students ask, not in despair by any means, but because they want an answer that will be sound in theory and workable in practice. It is our job to try to help them find such an answer.

More crudely, what the student needs to develop is a sense of responsibility, first to himself, to fulfill the best and strongest and highest potentialites that may be latent in him so that he can have something to do and contribute, and second to society and the world, to give the best he has and do the most he can to make it a better society and a better world for himself and others to live and work in.

For this aim he needs more virtues than humility, tolerance, wisdom, and magnanimity; he needs also strength, courage, independence, generosity, and a lively imagination—virtues, in general, which lead to the greatest possible self-development and the greatest possible self-involvement in the affairs of the universe.

How can we forward this aim?

We teachers of English, together with tachers of other languages, can do more than anyone else, in my opinion, to foster the virtues I have mentioned. Language is one of the most obvious, and obviously one of the most powerful, instruments for expressing, if we may not say creating, an individual's relations with others in his society and with the material things of the world, relations which at the same time define and in some sense determine his own internal relations. It is our chief means, in common experience, of formulating and thus of realizing the ideas on which we act, and it is one of our chief means of acting, directly on other people, indirectly on the material world. The more accurately and strongly we can express ourselves in words, the more richly we can live.

When this same medium of language is transcendently organized in works of art, those works take their places and take up their functions among the other experimental probings of experience to discover its deepest realities and its highest meanings, of which the arts are the freest and most daring flights. In the arts, as creators or audience, we try the qualities of experience itself, not only the experience we have but the far greater depth and range of experience we can imagine, or be persuaded to imagine, we might have. We explore our potential as well as our actual relations, we see and feel what we do and what we have in us to do, we manipulate the very stuff of our lives, as if we shaped our powers in the stuff of atoms and stars.

Who will teach us to teach these things?

The question is one to make angels weep. No one will teach us. No one can teach us. We must learn for ourselves, and help our students to learn for themselves in turn. For better or worse, we ourselves are the best teachers, in our discipline, that now exist. No doubt we should be better than we are; perhaps we can be; let us hope we will be, and work to make the hope come true. But we cannot even teach one another to teach, by the use of any slick methods or formulas; the most we can do is encourage one another to learn, and hold up our heads, and tell our doubtless well-meaning but usually ignorant critics, as politely as we can, to go to the devil.

R. P. ADAMS
Lafayette College

Ernest Van Keuren, formerly Head of the Division of Humanities, Univ. of Illinois at Chicago, and well known to CEA members, died of a heart attack on August 7. He was a past president of the Chicago CEA, a member of the national committee on CEA-sponsored liaison activities, and chairman of the committee on arrangements for the 1953 national CEA meeting at Chicago.

Study Grants in Adult Education

The Fund for Adult Education is offering approximatey 100 awards for academic study, supervised field experience, or combinations of the two for the improvement and advancement of persons concerned with the liberal or general education of adults. The awards will be made by a National Committee on Study Grants appointed by the Fund for Adult Education.

Requests for application blanks should be addressed to The Fund for Adult Education, National Committee on Study Grants, 141 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago 4, Illinois. The deadline for applications for study awards is Oct. 7 and for scholarships and fellowships Nov. 1.

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"General" Education as a Hot Air Bath

In states where a five-year program of college study is now the requirement for a teaching certificate in elementary or high school, the professed aim is to free undergraduates from an excessive number of Education courses, so that they might take a richer liberal-arts program, and become better educated people, postponing most of the specialized courses and practice-teaching until the fifth year.

Yet the result in some colleges has been to encourage Education Departments to seize on more of the students' time than ever before, and to tie down the undergraduate from the very beginning of his freshman year to a "teachers' college" conception of a five-year program for teachers. This program often consists of two years of "General Education" (newly designed, extremely general courses, which are pushing out subjects of solider content for *all* undergraduates); a minimum "major" of thirty hours; and all the rest in the theory and method of contemporary Progressive Education.

With contempt for "mere subject-matter," the new stream-lined program for the first two years confuses the idea of "liberal" with that of "easy-going." "Integration" means: listening to professorial generalizations about all arts, all sciences, all social studies, and "general language;" going on field-trips to factories, slums, hospitals, or even to farms, to see what cows look like and how cabbages grow; handing in as a semester-project in each of the four grand "subject-matter areas" a beautifully decorated scrap-book and diary.

After this relaxing, two-year bath in hot air, some students experience pangs of intellectual starvation, and decide not to become teachers. They move off into other fields, to find studies they can put their teeth into. The Education Department, interpreting this hunger as a sign of over-intellectualism and maladjustment, is glad to let them go. The students who stay in the program, however, are admirably fitted to parrot for three more years the anti-intellectualist propaganda of Education professors, and to carry it with them into the teaching profession.

Reform from Within

If this picture is slightly exaggerated, my warm feelings on the subject come from a twelve-year battle at one college, on the losing side. My own philosophy owes more to William James and John Dewey than to any other source, and I do not sympathize with those current attacks on Progressive Education which seem to be part of an attempt to reestablish Absolutes and Authority in religion and politics as well as education. Instead, it seems to me to be possible, looking only for relative and pragmatic values in education, to support such ideas as the following:

1) That young people who know with their imagination and feelings some part of the past become more useful to society and interesting to themselves, than those who think that only Now matters.

2) That those who have mastered, from systematic study and practice, a moderately fluent use of numbers, grammar and rhetoric (i. e., those who can figure, read and write better than the average high-school graduate) have valuable tools for thinking, and are urgently needed in all businesses and professions.

3. That those who have studied literature or philosophy, economics or psychology—intensively and from major texts—have a better chance to develop critical intelligence, and a better preparation for life, than those who learn only devices for making money in business, appearing well-informed in general conversation, or making an elementary-school classroom sound busy and cheerful.

4. That some of the process of becoming well-educated is bound to be laborious, and that students capable of absorbing a liberal education are willing to labor at it, under consistent administrative leadership and good teaching.

I utter these platitudes in the hope of finding support not only among English professors, but among some Education professors, —those who think that too many of Dewey's disciples have sadly misapplied his ideas. Is there any way in which we can insist that prospective teachers be given a genuinely liberal education? Education Departments that I have known profess to be the only experts in designing curricula for teachers. One result of their triumph, in some liberal-arts colleges that I have observed, has been that the most intelligent students have shuddered at the prospect of going through five years of such training, and have turned to some other profession.

AN ENGLISH PROFESSOR

Say It Isn't So, Joe

Fish Story with Moral

Prof. Louis Foley's discussion of the expression *ain't* in the Dec. 1952 issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan*, entitled 'Defenders of Grammatical Heresy," reminds me of the story of my first largemouth black bass, "caught" when I was 10 or so years old. What actually happened was that someone attached to my hook a three-and-a-half pounder landed earlier in the day, without my being aware of the circumstances.

If you base a scholarly polemic on evidence supplied by a newspaper clipping, you may have a genuine catch and you may not. Unfortunately, an anonymous feature writer for a wire service placed a dead fish on Foley's line.

He says that linguistic authorities at meetings of learned societies, whose remarks would ordinarily attract little or no attention, come out vociferously in defense of ain't because of the "sure-fire publicity" value of the statement.

The Fourth Estate

Although Prof. Foley does not mention names in his article, it can be ascertained by consulting the Dec. 28, 1951 United Press dispatch he gives as one of his references that one of the linguistic authorities is the distinguished American modern scientific linguist, Charles Carpenter Fries, of the University of Michigan, author of *American English Grammar* and *The Structure of English*.

Incidentally, the same dispatch, with a Detroit, Mich. dateline, appeared in the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* six months later and doubtless had appeared in many other newspapers throughout the country in the meantime.

Remnants of Older Patterns

But according to *College English* (Vol. 13, No. 7), Prof. Fries sharply protested the original report on the interview in question. What he had actually said to the reporter, as he himself summed it up, was the following:

"The linguistic scientist tries to describe and analyze all the varieties of languages, exactly as they are. He finds in his investigations that the practices of those who speak what is called a single language may differ rather widely. These differences he tries to understand."

Prof. Fries then went on to explain the concept of levels of usage, citing the evidence in his own *American English Grammar* to show that many of the traditional and conventional rules taught in schools do not now represent, and never really have represented, the practices of Standard English. He remarked that many of the forms used by the uneducated are not mistakes derived from Standard English by carelessness but remnants of older patterns discarded in the evolution of our language.

Double Jeopardy

Of course Prof. Foley may not have been fooled at all by the misquoted nonsense about *ain't* in the Fries interview. Instead, he may sincerely feel that scholars who have anything to say about language should keep quiet, unless what they have to say happens to agree with "the doctrine of correctness."

But to say, with Prof. Foley, that modern scientific linguists come out in defense of *ain't* because they are after publicity is just so much balderdash. Anyone who feels that way has let a newspaper feature writer put a dead fish on his line.

JOHN WALDMAN
Pace College

What's Wrong with "Communication"?

I am grateful to you for drawing my attention to Leroy Loemker's review in the December 1952 issue of *The CEA Critic* and I like his emphasis on the importance of *what* you communicate as well as *how*. Here, certainly, is another problem without panaceas. But I still don't understand anyone who says he doesn't know what "communication" means (a statement I heard made at the Johnny Victor Theatre).

What's so wrong with a dictionary definition: "Intercourse by words, letters or messages; interchange of thoughts or opinions?"

Surely some element of system in communication is better than none—provided we don't all get like the German archeologist who lived with the mountain tribes in Guatemala and found they had no organized grammar. After two years work he had succeded in systemizing their language into written form and then commenced telling the tribesmen where they were making mistakes in talking their own tongue. Obviously, however, I must be looking at the whole matter far too innocently if there is such a to-do about the subject.

JULIAN STREET, JR.
United States Steel Corporation

Rolled Trousers

Readers of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" who have been puzzled by his resolve to "wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled" will have been interested in following the correspondence on the subject of "Turned-up Trousers" which appeared in *The Times* (London) between April 19 and May 5, 1952, and in seeing the "Week-end Competition" which appeared in *The New Statesman and Nation* for May 24, 1952.

Prufrock a Daring Dresser

Although the evidence presented by some dozen older readers of *The Times* on the questions when and where turned-up trousers were introduced is not wholly conclusive and contains some serious discrepancies, one can now, with some confidence, hold that the fashion began in the early 90's and that Prufrock was flirting with a practice which still was identified with younger and reasonably daring dressers.

The most formidable dissident to such a conclusion who appears in the columns of *The Times* is a certain "John Taylor, Editor of *The Tailor and Cutter*," who, in a letter appearing on May 5, 1952, holds that one Aloysius Bredloser, a successful kitchen-range manufacturer, introduced the style in question at 3:46 p. m., on April 1, 1858, when he slipped furtively out of a tailor's establishment on Albemarle Street, wearing the trousers of a suit which was in process of being altered to fit him and which he found himself unable to pay for.

The Dissidence of Dissent

This heavily documented communication may perhaps be set aside in favor of the more obviously genuine letters from aging clergymen and other public school and university graduates, who agree that in the early 90's, either at Eton (the strongest possibility) or at Cambridge or Oxford, certain young men appeared with their "trousers rolled," either because a tailor of unusual powers of mind had discovered that trousers look better when worn this way or because the young men themselves had decided it is a matter of some importance that men's socks be spectacular and therefore be made more easily visible than was possible under the old dispensation.

"Taking It Up Like Lamp-Wicks"

Those who could wish they might give a sparkling gloss to Eliots' line will regret that the various explanations given in the *New Statesman* competition must be rejected as spurious. It is particularly regrettable that they cannot point out that turned-up trousers first appeared in the cellar under the cellar of the Cafe Royal in 1895, when Andrew Crowcroft, during "port week," one night when "the stuff was ankle deep," advised his friend to "turn up the ends" of his trousers, which were "taking it up like lamp-wicks."

R. H. LLEWELLYN
Temple University

The Professor and the Poem

He removes his tortoise-shell spectacles, fingers them nervously, then slips them on again. "One should approach a poem as one would a mathematical problem," he says. "A poem should be diciphered, analyzed, and broken down into its component parts."

Perhaps he is right, his students think. They have a reverence for numbers and measurements. Mathematics is a pure, objective discipline, and it may disclose the essential structure of Rossetti's "Lovesight." "Observe," he says, "how the ideas and the sentence patterns are intimately fused with the form. The poem opens with a question. 'When do I see thee most, beloved one?' In the next three lines this question is intensified to round out the thought of the first quatrain. The second quatrain develops variations on the theme that is expressed in the first, thus keying the questioning to an even higher pitch. Then, with the octave concluded, the basic thought emerges openly in the next three lines. Note, however, that the third line is actually a part of the final quatrain. In this manner, the implications of the entire experience, which are focused in the last three lines of the final quatrain, are linked grammatically and poetically to the preceding development of the basic theme."

The students concentrate upon his words. They record them with bookkeeping accuracy. No one seems to be aware of the warm breeze that sifts through the open window and disturbs the lecture notes on the professor's desk.

"This sonnet reveals Rossetti's skill in employing a variety of poetic devices. His use of alliteration achieves a hovering atmosphere, a musical quality, and a rich verbal texture. For example, in 'Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies' and 'my soul only sees thy soul its own,' the letter 's' produces an effect of softness and sinuous sensuousness. This sibilant sound occurs thirty-three times and is found in one-third of the words of this poem. Here and elsewhere, Rossetti utilizes consonants not only to create moods but also to achieve rhythmic designs. Examine the results obtained by the use of the liquid 'l'; it appears in one-fourth of the words..."

He speaks from behind a sober grimace. For a moment, in his amazingly white shirt, he reminds one of a surgeon lecturing in an operating room. More than once the students have heard him utter the remark with which he prefaces his discussion of Eliot's *Four Quartets* "Wield the critical instrument as the surgeon does his scalpel—to cut away, to remove tissue, to dissect, to get at the very nerves themselves." He adjusts his mask and proceeds to the task before him. "Word compounds, by condensing and concentrating images, increase the emotional intensity of this poem. 'Ground-whirl' and 'close-kissed,' for intance, evoke many more connotations than any elaboration of these images could have done. Rossetti also employs onomatopoeia. 'Ground-whirl of the perished leaves' suggests the rustling of dry leaves, and 'close-kissed' suggests the sound of the act itself."

Now each nerve is exposed and carefully labeled. His students recall that his article on the use of "sublime" by the Romantic poets also was marked by this precise and incisive approach. The article created a stir among the members of the department, inciting the Classicists and the Romanticists to exchange barbs that were only slightly blunted by academic civility. The students seemed to be impressed by the bitterness if not by the depth of the controversy.

He pauses and peers at his notes through his bifocals. Then he clears his throat, wipes the corners of his mouth with a handkerchief, and gazes out of the Gothic window at the neighboring office buildings.

"There is another view that one may take. A poem is more than technique, more than theme. A poem may be considered the product of the poet's illness—the pearl of the irritated oyster, the ambergris of the ailing whale. Rossetti's effort to fuse spiritual and physical love in his poetry is a reflection of his own psychopathology. The artist who attempts—that is one who finds it necessary to attempt—to reconcile the flesh and the spirit reveals that he himself is torn by that very dichotomy. The poetry is merely the instrument for resolving that split. In this sense, the poet is his own psychiatrist, for each creative act results in a temporary healing of the neurotic breach. And so it is with Rossetti. This poem is the erotic dream of an ascetic..."

The students are entranced. The words continue to issue from his mouth in magic patterns, but now his hands are delivering a lecture of their own. The fingers move: they smooth the lapel of his coat, brush the loose wisps of his hair, and futilely try to still his lecture notes that are ruffled by the breeze. Vaguely irritated, his face says that he wishes he could stop speaking. Some things, however, are propelled by an internal logic that defies control. He must continue speaking. In a sudden gesture of rebellion against the domination of this fate, he turns away from his notes and begins to recite the poem. The students are disturbed. They find it difficult to concentrate; they become lost and copy frantically from those who sit beside them. The professor does not have a pleasant voice. One of his colleagues once described it as New England brittleness edged with mourning grey. Finally, still gazing out of the window, he whispers the last three lines: "'How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope,/ The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,/ The wind of Death's imperishable wing?'"

The lecture is at an end. He is relieved. He packs his briefcase, leaves the granite building, and starts to drive home toward his suburban house of seven rooms. Once there, he will walk in the garden and feel serenity soothe his nerves as he wanders among his fifty-seven red and yellow roses, his thirty tulips, and infinite blades of grass. Toward evening, eased by the shadows, he will fondle the flowers with his white fingers. Then he will go to her room and sleep alone in one of the two beds.

JOSEPH WHITT
Georgia Institute of Technology

Accent on Quality

Brown University will be inaugurating this fall a new experiment in higher education which should be of interest to all readers of *The CEA Critic*, especially insofar as this program affects the English Department. The new plan was devised at Brown by a group led by Vice-President Bruce Bigelow. It was submitted to the Carnegie Corporation as an educational project worthy of support; the plan was approved, and Brown was given a grant of $250,000 to enable the University to put the program into effect for a five-year experimental period. This Carnegie grant will be used to finance fourteen new courses, given by thirteen departments.

Criticism of Ideas

The basic idea behind the Brown experiment is that many students entering college have enough maturity and ability to tackle work which is more challenging, stimulating, and demanding of real intellectual effort than that which is required now in most introductory courses, especially in the humanities and social sciences. Instead of "covering" a given amount of cut-and-dried material which the student is expected to learn and hand back to the instructor in examinations, the new courses will be concerned with the identification and criticism of ideas. Within each department involved in the program, each course will be centered on one or more classic works in the particular field, which will be studied both intensively and extensively in terms of the larger social, political, and religious questions which each work raises. According to the official Brown University Course Announcement, "The first objective will be to discover the ideas originating or developed in the book, particularly those which have proved of long-range significance and which reappear as vital concepts in later literature and experiences." Frequent critical papers and extensive readings around the philosophic area of the central text will, of course, be required. Presumably at least part of the class work will be conducted in seminar fashion.

Selective at First

To be sure, these special courses are strictly experimental, and, as such, will not be open to all students, at least not at first. The long-range plan, however, includes the possibility of making the program permanent and available to all, replacing older traditional courses, in the event that the new courses prove in practice to be markedly successful with selected students. For the time being, the experimental courses will be electives restricted to freshmen in the upper half of the entering class and to sophomores who stood in the upper half of their freshman class.

New Courses

Next fall Brown plans to begin its fourteen new courses, all of which will be two-semester courses. Two courses will be offered by the English Department, and one by each of the following departments: Art ("The World of Art Today"—special problems); Biblical Literature ("Religious Ideas in the Bible"); Biology ("Basic Ideas in Modern Biology"); Classics ("Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics"); Economics ("Political Economy"—Adam Smith); French ("Ideas and Literary Problems on Voltaire's 'Contes Philosophiques'"); History ("Growth of the Modern States"); Mathematics ("A Modern Introduction to Analytical Geometry and Calculus"); Philosophy ("The Philosophy of Justice and Knowledge"—Plato and Locke); Political Science ("The Political Idea of Freedom"); Psychology ("Psycology as the Science of Behavior"); and Spanish ("Interplay of the Real and Ideal in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*").

The Brown English Department is offering two special courses under this program, one in English literature and one in American literature. The former, under the direction of Professor I. J. Kapstein, will be entitled "Man's Faith and Fate," and will be centered on the following major poems: Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, Byron's *Manfred*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayaam*, Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and Eliot's *The Rock*. The poems will be studied as works of art as well as vehicles of ideas. The course in American literature, directed by Professor Randall Stewart, will be called "The Problem of American Individualism," and will be based on a critical reading of five major novels: Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, James' *The American*, Dreiser's *The Financier*, and Faulkner's *Light in August*.

Faculty Enthusiastic

Such, in brief, is the shape of things to come at Brown. The several members of the Brown faculty whom I have spoken to about the experiment are unanimously enthusiastic. Professor Kapstein comments as follows: "This program promises to be something exciting and different. It is an attempt to offer to freshmen a course which is really on a college level, to introduce them early to the criticism of ideas, to put them on their own two feet intellectually, and, if possible, to make men of them. We don't ask enough of our freshmen; perhaps if we asked more we might get more. At least, that is the theory on which the experiment is based."

A program of this kind is inevitably appealing and challenging to the teacher; let us hope that the students too will find it provocative and rewarding. Are freshmen and sophomores really capable of rising to a challenge of this sort? That is the big question which will be answered at Brown University during the next few years. College teachers everywhere will be interested in the results.

ALLAN H. MACLAINE
University of Massachusetts

Grammar Again

I was interested in three articles on Fries' *The Structure of English* in the March isue of *The CEA Critic*. I should like to call attention to two other recent articles, and to add some observations of my own.

The first article is *Whose Good English?* by Louis B. Salomon in the *AAUP Bulletin*, Autumn, 1952. This article deals with the new linguistics and makes a number of interesting points. One is that the general public actually does not want to be "the final arbiter" of language usage. I can testify to this fact. A friend of mine recently seemed to think that I was a bit lax because I did not condemn "This is the *closest* of the two." A reference to Hall's English Usage, which, as early as 1917, stated that the comparative degree of adjectives seemed on the road to extinction except before *than*, did not convince him that general usage should prevail, even if no unclearness would result. On the other hand—and I agree with him—Salomon asserts that any "old fashioned rules" that will bring about "a closer rapport between writer and reader" should be adhered to.

A more recent article is *Grammar in a New Key*, by Robert Pooley, printed in *American Speech* for February, 1953. This is a review of Fries' *The Structure of English*. Pooley says that Fries' book requires painstaking reading on the part of the practicing teacher, and that the practicing teacher will not know what to do with the book, even if he reads it carefully. Pooley says further that if one likes systematic analysis, one will admire this analysis by Fries, but he adds that the grammar of the schools "will plod the traditional path" for a long time to come.

Shortly after *The Structure of English* was published, I read it to ascertain its possibilities as a text in college freshman English. Noting that Fries (on page 55) said that a knowledge of grammar (i. e., of the conventional kind) has meant "the ability to apply and react to" seventy items of technical terminology, I began jotting down the items which I thought a freshman English student would have to apply and react to if he should use Fries' book. Here is how Fries' items added up:

Parts of Speech—four main headings and 21 subordinate headings; Function Words—fifteen main headings and ten subordinate headings; Structural Pattern of Sentences—three main headings and twenty subordinate headings; Subjects, Objects—three main headings and seven subordinate headings! Modifiers—five main headings and thirty-six subordinate headings; Sequence and Included Sentences—five main headings and four subordinate headings. These make a total of thirty-five main headings and ninety-eight subordinate headings, or a grand total of one hundred thirty-three headings. In addition, there were ten formulas for finding subject and object, five for "self-forms," and then ten steps for the analysis of sentences.

I have not re-read the book and hence have not checked my count, but I do not believe that my figures are far wrong.

At any rate, I decided to plod along the path of traditional grammar for a while longer, because I thought that it would be a shorter and smoother path than that of *The Structure of English*.

MAURICE HICKLIN
Humboldt State College

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Student Evaluations

(Continued from Page 1)

himself than his students know about him. On some few points, it is true, they see him as he cannot see himself. Unlike him, they know what his voice sounds like. But the psychiatric training that might enable them to make a new man of him is not theirs. How should it be? Most of their view of life, it appears, is expressible in a few clichés: "Learning to get along with other people." "Being of service to not only oneself but also to their community." "Recreation is a 'must' for young and old alike."

How are they going to judge fairness, for instance? They do not see the work of the class as a whole; it is not feasible to show it to them. They couldn't understand it if they saw it. Practically they must decide an instructor's fairness according to personal experience; i. e., did he at any time during the semester bitterly disappoint them—"I worked over five hours on that theme"—or did he not?

Friendliness

But the most interesting phase of many evaluations is introduced by the word *friendliness*. The typical student thinks that friendliness is essential in a good teacher. I do not know where he got this notion, but since it is unnatural—for student and teacher are born enemies—he heard it somewhere, very likely in the same place where he heard that football teaches leadership and fair play; and in the same way it entered into his folk-lore. It is, of course, nonsense.

It is true that a state of rankling personal hatred should not exist between a teacher and his little charges. It is even true that friendliness of a mild, agreeable, and generally meaningless kind may and often does happily exist between them. But such friendliness is perfectly irrelevant to a teacher's professional capacity, and it is a pity that the evaluation form, by raising the question at all, simply reinforces the legend.

I am not sure, but apparently, if you get a good score on friendliness from evaluating students, you do so because you avoid severe criticism of their academic shortcomings, irony (which, if they catch it, they normally construe as personal insult), and anything suggesting the stuffed shirt. Like Willy Loman, they feel that a sentiment is more important than a fact.

Incompetent Judges

Bear in mind who is passing judgment upon our courses and our scholarship and our textbooks and our teeth. Not the banner student of discrimination and golden promise. But the man who in a semester or even a year cannot master the form of a four-line theme endorsement nor remember a three-digit file number nor even, sometimes, the single letter designating the section he is a member of. He has read little that he was not obliged to read, and having made no effort to understand any of it, he is still in the vestibule of literacy with no prospect of entering the hall.

He has a working vocabulary of between 75 and 250 words, few of which he can spell; and to use a dictionary violates his code. He knows that the Middle Ages are over but thinks that they ended in what he calls the 17th century but is really the 18th. We would never think of trusting this hooligan to give us a phone number or an address accurately; we would verify it in the book. If we sent him to the corner for a dozen eggs we would write his errand on a piece of paper and tell him to show it to the storekeeper.

Yet we invite him to sit in judgment on us—and really a good deal worse—on the defenseless great men whom we represent. Certainly every student should be encouraged to entertain an opinion of what he reads; better a poor one than none at all. But God forbid that he should be encouraged to think that his right to an opinion makes this opinion as good as anyone else's, or that it is a tribunal before which Keats and Milton may be helplessly arraigned.

The crowning difficulty of all, though, is that in a thoroughly rational educational society it would not be imagined that the student, however intelligent and able, had any right to judge his preceptors as part of his educational experience, whatever he might say to his roommate. It is rational that an instructor's performance should be judged by his peers or, better, by his superiors; it is not right that it should be judged by his disciples.

It seems as if the evaluation program is part of the misapplied "democracy" that made Mark Twain's unit of the Confederate Army so ineffective in the campaign of 1861. Education, whether we like it or not, is not in most senses of the word democratic, and nothing can make it so. But we encourage the learners to feel that they are as good as the teachers—which, in the educational context, is simply not so—and we prepare them for much further delusion in later life as the belief that wages and prices are not connected, and that stream pollution, deadlier automobiles, and overpopulation equal progress. In short we encourage them to believe, not that sentiment is more congenial than fact—we all knew that at birth—but that it is just as good and a little milder, too.

R. L. ARMSTRONG
Lehigh

Not Never?

"Two negatives *never* make a positive, as some pedants assert," he boomed. He was always ready to denigrate pendants. "The average man never uses two negatives

"Not never," said the older professor, gently.

"Well," said the other, slightly dashed, "I suppose it is a bit substandard."

The professor smiled only. He hoped the other would not never get it.

WILSON O. CLOUGH
Univ. of Wyoming

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Regional CEA Meetings

The Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina regional CEA is scheduled to meet Nov. 14 at Sweet Briar College, Lynchburg, Va. Mary Vincent Long (Hollins), regional president, is heading up the comittee on program.

The New England CEA will hold its fall meeting at Wellesley College, Oct 31. Speakers will include Professors Hindus of Brandeis, Wolcox of Bennington, John Holmes and a publisher to discuss Freshman texts. Max Goldberg will explain the CEA Institute.

The CEA will cooperate with the RMMLA in a meeting to be held Oct. 9-10 at El Paso on the subject of English teaching.

Leviathan on a Hook

I have written a wicked book,
and feel spotless as the lamb.
—Herman Melville

"I have written a wicked book," he said,
But his heart was high and free;
So he shook his fist at man and God
(God saw the devilish glee).

"Hubris," God said; "I'll strike him down."
So in God's Godly way
He wreaked his vengance on the man
(Pride's wages man must pay).

God racked his body and his mind,
God gave him hell on earth;
In anguish now his tortured soul
Cried out and cursed his birth.

I meditate God's ways to man;
Nor can I deem it odd
That proud, rebellious, sinful man
Should shake his fist at God.

MARTIN STAPLES SHOCKLEY
North Texas State College

Christobel

Mr. Dean B. Lyman's "Completion" of *Christobel* is a stunning performance. It will do *as is*, and we can only be grateful for this example in our time of a literary *tour de force* that has really struck fire. I make only these observations:

1. As there is almost nothing Latinic among the words of the Coleridge part, one may feel a slight jar to the sensibilites in Lyman's lines 669, 765, 917, 980-81, 996-97, 1096, 1137, 1175-79, 1335-36, 1353-54 1367.

2. Coleridge's part is without literary overtones. It may be questioned therefore whether Lyman has a definite legal right to his lines 812 and 1197-1200.

A. M. WITHERS
Virginia Polytechnic Institute

The Crown and the Laurel

A. E. Johnson (Syracuse) has published a book of poetry "the time of whose writing spans over a quarter of a century in three countries, Canada, America, England," which brings moving tribute to those things the poet most values: the bond of English-speaking people united in language, tradition, culture and love of liberty. It can be obtained from the Syracuse Univ. Book Store, Syracuse 10, N. Y.

Purdue-CEA Institute

The interpretive report of the conference on "The Application of English Studies in an Industrial Civilization," held at Purdue, June 4-5, shows the long and careful planning, the earnestness and candor of the discussion, the determination to build soundly through disinterested assessment of the first effort.

There is much useful information and food for thought in this report. Those wishing copies should get in touch with the executive officer of the conference, Prof. E. Glenn Griffin, Department of English, Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind.

CEA Institute at Gainesville

Numerous comments have arrived concerning the CEA Institute held at the University of Florida, June 24-26, in conjunction with the annual sessions of the American Society for Engineering Education. These, as well as the proceedings themselves, await synthesis and evaluation.

Meanwhile, these items are noted. Linton E. Grinter, Dean of the Graduate School and Director of Research at the University of Florida, and newly elected ASEE president, declared that the plight of the liberal arts is that their practitioners have been given too few of the technical students for too short periods of time. Sarah Herndon found the Institute experience so valuable she decided to share it with her colleagues at the Florida State University, Tallahassee; and did so through a twelve-page mimeographed report. Copies may be had from Prof. Herndon.

1953 National CEA Meeting

In Chicago, December 27. Afternoon session followed by supper. All efforts being made to keep cost down, quality up. Speakers: William Werner, Penn State, chairman CEA committee on PhD Curriculum Revision; Kathrine Koller, University of Rochester, member MLA Commission on Trends in Education. Presiding: Napier Wilt, Dean of Humanities, University of Chicago. In cooperation with Bob Fitzhugh, Chicago CEA is making arrangements. Details in future Critics. Mark the date now.

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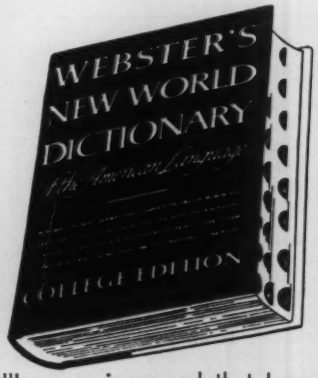

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